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# THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION,  
JACKSON PARK, CHICAGO, ILL.,

ON

## PENNSYLVANIA DAY,

SEPTEMBER 7th, 1893,

BY

JAMES M. BECK,

OF THE PHILADELPHIA BAR.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PRESS OF ALLEN, LANE & SCOTT,  
1893.





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**NOTE.**

This brief address is reprinted by request for private circulation. The length of the programme and the number of speakers on the occasion of its delivery necessarily abbreviated it in length and matter, and prevented any elaborate discussion. Closely following Mr. Depew's eulogy on New York, and spoken in a city which does not permit its achievements to be unnoticed, the address was simply designed to briefly set forth the claims to greatness of Philadelphia, which, with its modest Quaker spirit, most needs a quickened civic pride.

GIFT  
MRS. WOODROW WILSON  
NOV. 23, 1939

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## MEN OF PENNSYLVANIA :

Honorable is the privilege of participating at this noble gathering of nations in the exercises in honor of Pennsylvania. She is worthy of such special recognition. Apart from her exalted rank in the sisterhood of States, and measured not less by her achievements than her imperial resources, she is a mighty nation. Time, the great justicer, has verified the prediction as to Pennsylvania of its prophet-founder, that God would "bless it and make it the seed of a nation," for the "holy experiment" of Penn has become a glorious reality in a noble Commonwealth, whose star is ascendant in the constellation of the States. If the commercial unity or economic centralization of our time, resulting from the centripetal forces of steam and lightning, tends to destroy the pride of State and the very idea of its distinctive citizenship, yet let us preserve inviolate our love for, and allegiance to, our mother State. From her five million freemen let the prayer ascend, *God save the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.*

To this great fostering mother I bring this day the felicitations of her eldest and fairest born, the city of Philadelphia. With her million souls and two hundred thousand homes, where peace, contentment, and prosperity abide, she is the true American city, and the historic centre of the republic. What city in all the new world

has a record of equal glory? Take from the history of our country that which was done upon her soil, and that mighty volume of transcendent achievement would not only lose its noblest chapter, but its very argument as well. What historically, Greece would be without Athens, Italy without Rome, France without Paris, England without London, would America be without Philadelphia. Let us forever reject the false and pitiful standard which measures the relative greatness of a city by the mere number of its people, the extent of its area, the value of its fabrics, or the swelling sail it sends forth upon the high seas. These make not a true metropolis. We value Athens for Pericles and Phidias, Socrates and Plato, while the number of its people has been forgotten. The area and population of Rome in its period of greatness are alike forgotten. The London of Elizabeth is known to us because of Shakespeare and Bacon, Jonson and Coke, while the unnumbered money changers, who coined their lives into yellow gold, have faded into oblivion as the stars melt into the dawn. Nations, as individuals, are only great in proportion to their impress on the after ages. In all that is enduringly great, in that which challenges the searching scrutiny of the centuries and advances the increasing purpose of the ages, "in the arduous greatness of things done," in those achievements which make history and lay the foundations for a better civilization, Philadelphia may, in the eternal tourney of fame, proudly and without fear throw down the gauntlet to all comers.

Here civil and religious liberty were, if not born, yet nourished into sturdy life. In an age of fierce intolerance, when even in our new world, peopled though it was by persecution, the Puritan was persecuting the peaceful Quaker and driving Roger Williams into the wilderness, and the Anglican of Virginia was compelling attendance upon his church by cruelly drastic laws, Philadelphia became an asylum for all humanity, where every creed was not merely tolerated, but had an indefeasible *right* to worship God in its own way and according to its own judgment.

Here, too, the foundations of a free government, a true democratic Commonwealth, were laid, where, in the words of its frame of government, "the laws rule and the people are a party to the laws." Well did Penn, like Moses a law-giver, and like Isaiah a prophet, say: "We lay a foundation for after ages to understand their liberty. \* \* \* *For we put the power in the people.*" Recognizing that in the stern wedlock of necessity universal suffrage and universal education are inseparably united, Penn provided for a system of governmental education, and within one year after the first tree was felled on the banks of the Delaware, a public school was there erected. Here too, when austere Puritan was trafficking in human flesh, Pastorius issued the first American protest against African slavery. Here Franklin solved the sphinx-like enigma of the skies by drawing the lightning from the heavens and made possible the present and future achievements in electricity. To Philadelphia, American art owes its first academy, medicine its first college and hospital, education its first public library, geography its first Arctic expedition, navigation its first vessel propelled by steam for freight and passengers, transportation its first experimental railway, finance its first bank, insurance its first company, and journalism its first daily paper. Here also was commenced the noble system of charities, which, as a brilliant crown of many jewels, encircles the brow of Philadelphia and distinguishes her above every city in the world.

Of the American Union, that political Messiah to all nations, Philadelphia is the Bethlehem and its ancient State House the manger. It was Penn, who in 1696 made the first proposition for that union, and it was Franklin, who in 1754 revived it at Albany. Of that epic struggle, Philadelphia was the storm centre. Her historic bell tolled for more than a decade a solemn warning to the mother country not to ill-treat her child, and later sounded a joyful pæan of victory, as America shook off her shackles and took her place among the nations of the earth. It was her people which first heard the iron-tongued reverberations

which proclaimed "liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof," and which will ceaselessly roll down the ages to time's latest day. If, unlike Rome, she have no Coliseum, whose fall shall be her fall, yet grander than its crumbling walls is the yellow parchment in which men read their title clear to liberty. Should that great Declaration become a dead letter, free government would perish from among the children of men. Here met the first and second Continental Congress. Here Henry thundered, Jefferson wrote, Franklin counseled, Adams debated, Morris administered, and Washington unsheathed his sword. Within her walls is Germantown, and in her suburbs the waters of the Brandywine and the snows of Valley Forge were incarnadined with patriot blood. Here was designed, woven, and first flung to the breeze, there to float forever, the emblem of our nationality, whose silken and star-spangled folds wave over our vast domain, illumined with the glory of eternal day. Here met the Constitutional Convention, and, after months of travail, completed the Constitution of the United States, most perfect frame of government as yet vouchsafed to man. Here those master builders, Jefferson and Hamilton, Adams and Washington, constructed with strength more enduring than granite, "the indestructible union of indestructible States." In Philadelphia that august tribunal, the Supreme Court of the United States, had its most momentous sessions, and held in the scales of justice federal supremacy and state sovereignty in nicest equipoise.

When the Union was threatened, the great war President found no more loyal support in the broad land than in Philadelphia. Here he stopped on the eve of his first inauguration, as if to consecrate his exalted genius to the service of his distracted country at the birth-place of its liberties and the most sacred altar of its patriotism. At his call a mighty army sprang from her homes, whose courage and fortitude were such, that of the Pennsylvania Reserves, more than one-half fell dead or wounded on the field of battle. The decisive struggle of the war, which



said to the red tide of rebellion, "Hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," was fought and won under her distinguished son, George Gordon Meade, while the ultimate success of the great conflict owed much to the genius for organization of her McClellan.

It is the crowning glory of Philadelphia that upon her soil reunion was effected. The great warfare of men is that of ideas; its battle-ground, the human soul. Of these the roar of cannon is the outward sign, the array of armies the outward show. The civil war neither commenced with Sumter nor ended with Appomattox. It existed in the minds of our countrymen, and estranged them a half a century before, and raged in their souls long after Lee placed his sword in the hand of the chivalrous Grant. Over ravaged fields, desolated homes, and new-made graves, North and South gazed at each other with a hatred ill-concealed, which was the more intense because it was fratricidal, and a seemingly impassable gulf of blood separated them. Thus the approaching centenary of the republic found only sectional acrimony in our country. Then it was that Philadelphia revived the recollections of the time of real union, when Adams and Jefferson, Franklin and Washington stood shoulder to shoulder in defense of American liberties, and invited both North and South and the nations of the earth to be her guests. Unaided by the gift of a single penny from the National Government, in the period of prostration following a great panic, and with little real co-operation from sister States, she held her exhibition and surpassed all that had gone before. To its wondrous influence we owe a nascent American art of whose first fruits, as seen in yonder gallery of art and the noble peristyle, a Phidias might be proud and a Michael Angelo envy. The City of the Centennial this day sends its greeting to the City of the Quadri-Centennial. It envies not the superior beauty and extent of this present exhibition, but claims that they are the ripened fruit of the epoch-making Exposition of 1876. Moreover, Philadelphia

may proudly claim that the Centennial Exposition will have forever a moral beauty and historic importance, such as even its magnificent successor cannot claim, for to its incomparably beautiful site, a veritable "Field of the Cloth of Gold," whose unadorned charms can challenge the artifice of man to equal, came estranged North and South, and with recollections of their common glory then commemorated inspiring them clasped hands in honest friendship and dedicated themselves thenceforth forever to the sublime work of creating a new and united America. Do you seek that new America, which asks in the words of its President "no allowance on the score of youth," look about you. This surpassing achievement of industry and art, called into existence as in a single night by the Aladdin lamp of genius, reflects its splendor which was made possible by Philadelphia.

Blessed are the peace-makers, and therefore thrice blessed thou, O Philadelphia! Upon thy soil union was born, disunion combated, and reunion effected. Thy task is not yet done, nor limited by the oceans that guard America as majestic sentinels. Thy spirit of pacification, the noble heritage of Penn, must permeate the world. Humanity has supreme need of it. On the continent of Europe, twenty millions of men, armed with weapons that make them the equivalent of any previous fifty millions, are dedicated to the awful task of their mutual destruction. Should war result, it is probable that the dials of civilization will be set back a century, and it is possible that even as the Norse Valhalla had its "twilight of the gods," so the noble fabric of modern civilization, which commenced with the printing press, may perish with the Krupp cannon. In this night of international hatred, the example of Penn in the founding of Philadelphia shines as the morning star, heralding the dawn of a better day. While elsewhere on the virgin continent the pioneers waged wars of extermination with the Indians, Penn, the grandest figure in our colonial history and one of the master spirits of all time, met the wild aborigines un-

armed, carrying in his right hand only gentle peace, thus demonstrating to the future ages that love is better and more potent than hate, reason than force. To the immortal founder of Philadelphia mankind is immeasurably indebted for this signal demonstration of the spiritual power and destiny of the race, for in treating an inferior and savage race as brethren he taught that the only path to international amity lies through justice and the realization of the brotherhood of men. Well may Bancroft declare that the "sublime purpose" of the famous treaty was "a recognition of the equal rights of humanity," noble ideal, behind which, alas, the plodding world wearily and ingloriously lags. Dark as is the prospect of the day, when humanity, like Sir Bedivere, will throw away the sword of war, and measure its claims by the eternal standard of justice, and lowering as are now the war clouds over the whole heavens, may we not trust to that "increasing purpose" and ever broadening intelligence of successive generations to realize the sublime ideal of Penn, even though it be at so distant a day that we, who are gathered here this morning at this peaceful pageant of nations, will long since have "faded like streaks of morning cloud into the infinite azure of the past?" At that future day—how distant God alone knows—it will be recognized by the wise and good of every race, that the angelic chorus of "peace on earth, good will to man," which first flooded the star-lit hills of Bethlehem with its divine harmonies, found its noblest echo from the banks of the Delaware and the city of Penn.

O Philadelphia, city of brotherly love, how much do we love and honor thee this day! Thou comest to this great gathering of nations, erect and radiant, with brow unsullied, and wearing an unfading laurel, and with unshackled hands layest at the feet of America thy incomparable gifts—liberty, patriotism, and peace. Philadelphia maneto!









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